Department for Education

Summer Schools Programme for Disadvantaged Pupils: Key findings for Schools

Research report

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Laurie Day, Kerry Martin, Caroline Sharp, Rachel Gardner & Jo Barham

NFER & Ecorys

Contents

Table of figures

1. Introduction

This report presents a summary of the findings from an evaluation of the 2012 Department for Education[1] Summer Schools Programme, which was undertaken by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) and Ecorys between July and December 2012. It is intended as a resource to be used by all schools who are considering running a Summer School for disadvantaged pupils.

1.1   The Summer Schools programme

In September 2011, the Deputy Prime Minister announced that £50 million would be made available for a Summer Schools programme for disadvantaged pupils[2] as part of the Pupil Premium. The main purpose of this initiative is to help those eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) and those looked after continuously for more than six months by the local authority[3], to make a successful transition from primary to secondary school.

The Department set the following specific aims for the Summer Schools programme:

- to allow pupils to see their new school environment;

- to allow schools to familiarise themselves with their new pupils, including identifying any additional needs they may have; and

- to improve the educational attainment of disadvantaged children, ensuring gains in primary school are not lost on transfer.

Participating secondary schools[4] were free to design their programme based on the needs of their incoming Year 7 cohort. Schools could decide on specific aims and objectives, the activities they wished to deliver, and whether these were offered in a single block (of one or two weeks) or broken into regular sessions across a longer period over the summer holidays. Each school was able to apply for £500 per disadvantaged pupil for a two-week Summer School and £250 for a one-week Summer School. Schools were invited to opt in to the programme by April 2012 and received confirmation of their provisional funding allocation in May 2012.

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[1] Henceforth referred to as the Department.

[2] Henceforth referred to as the Summer Schools programme.

[3] Henceforth referred to as disadvantaged pupils. All other pupils are termed 'non-disadvantaged' for the purposes of this research.

[4] This includes maintained schools (including special schools), Academies (including special schools), Free Schools (including special schools) and non-maintained special schools. The programme was focused on transition into Year 7 in all schools.

A total of 1,763 Summer Schools were held across England between July and September 2012. In November 2012, the Department announced that the Summer Schools programme will run again in 2013[5].

1.2   About the evaluation

In June 2012, the Department commissioned the NFER and Ecorys to undertake an independent evaluation of the first year of its Summer Schools programme. The evaluation aimed to establish the effectiveness of the programme in terms of its implementation and early outcomes.

A mixed methods approach was used, using a combination of survey research, programme data and qualitative fieldwork and analysis. The strands of work included:

- **A school survey** – completed by 877 schools[6], drawn from a random sample of all schools applying to take part in the 2012 Summer Schools programme (September – October 2012)[7].

- **Case-study visits** – Ten case-study schools were selected to reflect different school characteristics[8] and types of Summer School. The case studies involved interviews with staff, partner organisations, pupils and parents/carers. Initial visits were undertaken during the delivery of the Summer School provision (July – September 2012) and follow up visits took place after transition into Year 7 (October – December 2012).

- **A pupil survey** – exploring the impact of the programme on pupils' self-confidence and readiness for school (September – November 2012).

There are three outputs from the evaluation: this key findings report for schools, a more detailed overview report (available online), and a further report quantifying the impact of the programme on pupils, available spring 2013.

5

http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/premium/summer/a00216636/summerschoolsprogramme

[6] 838 of which actually ran Summer Schools. The remaining 39 schools initially signed up to run a Summer School but then withdrew.

[7] Survey sample 1,597 (response rate 55 per cent).

[8] The case-study sample included four maintained schools, four Academies, one Free School and one special school.

1.3   Purpose of the report

The purpose of the report is to present selected findings and associated examples of practice which schools can consider when running a Summer School. This document is structured to provide a summary of the key learning points from the evaluation, with regard to designing, planning and implementing a Summer School, and it reviews the outcomes that were achieved and how they were measured.

A full list of 'top tips' for schools can be found in Annex 1. If you have a top tip, you can tweet the Department at @educationgovuk. Alternatively, you can email: summerschools.programme@education.gsi.gov.uk

The evaluators would like to thank all of the schools, pupils and partner organisations that participated in the evaluation, and the Department and steering group members for their advice and support. We hope you find this report to be a useful resource.

2. Why offer a Summer School to disadvantaged pupils?

This section focuses on the rationale behind developing Summer School provision for disadvantaged pupils, including setting aims and objectives.

2.1 Building on existing transition arrangements

Schools taking part in the 2012 Summer Schools programme had a wide array of existing arrangements in place to support the transition process for pupils starting Year 7. Just over half (51 per cent) of the schools responding to the survey were already planning to hold a Summer School of some kind before the Department's funded scheme was announced.

When planning to offer a Summer School you might wish **to consider how you can enhance your existing offer to support the transition of disadvantaged pupils into Year 7**. Schools made use of their Summer School funding in the following ways (below).

To provide **a more targeted** approach – the Summer Schools programme is an opportunity to focus on disadvantaged pupils who could benefit the most from extra support, and to start thinking about their needs earlier. You might want to consider:

- What types of issues affect disadvantaged pupils in the new intake?
- How effective are your existing transition support activities in addressing these issues?
- What are the gaps in your school's existing offer, which the Summer School might help to address?

To offer **ambitious and challenging activities** – the funding allocation of £500 per disadvantaged child for two weeks of summer activities is beyond the scope of what has been possible for many schools to fund from their own budgets in previous years. Most schools responding to the survey made the most of the opportunity to design a varied programme of activities and made their offer even more appealing to pupils and their parents/carers. You might want to consider:

- What has worked well, when running summer activities or holiday clubs in previous years?
- What could the school offer with the Summer School funding that would not otherwise be possible?

- What will be the 'centrepiece' of your Summer School? Will there be a celebratory event, a special guest, or a chance for pupils to try something new?

For schools that have **never run a Summer School before**, a useful starting point is to find out about the types of activities that have been run by other schools in your area. Your existing arrangements for liaison with feeder primary schools and your links with partner organisations to deliver extended services should provide an effective platform for designing and running Summer School activities.

2.2   Setting aims and objectives

Having **clear aims and intended outcomes** for a Summer School can help to clarify what the school hopes to achieve, and provide a basis for designing a programme of activities. Schools responding to the survey had two main overarching aims for their Summer Schools:

- to prepare disadvantaged pupils socially and emotionally for transition, and
- to secure general improvements in pupils' academic progress and capacity to learn.

Schools often had a mix of social and academic objectives for their Summer School programme, but fewer Summer Schools were set up specifically to improve pupils' attainment as the following chart illustrates.

Chart 1 The main aims of Summer Schools (2012 survey)

Horizontal bar chart. Categories grouped as Social and Academic.

Social:
- Confidence & self esteem: 85%
- See school environment: 72%
- Staff / pupil relationships: 57%
- Teamwork skills: 52%
- School readiness: 49%
- Understand pupil needs: 33%

Academic:
- Engagement in learning: 60%
- Literacy & numeracy skills: 54%
- Close the attainment gap: 44%
- Independent learning: 23%
- Pupil attainment: 21%

n=838

Percentage of respondents
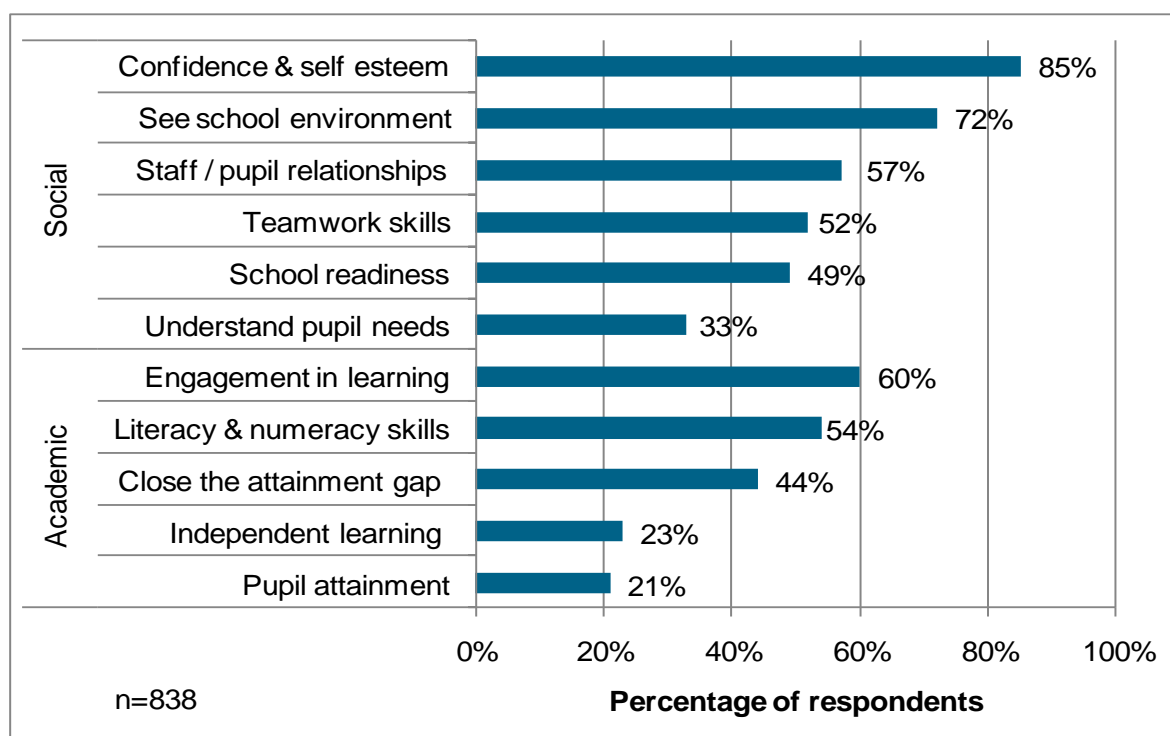
Schools could give more than one answer so percentages sum to more than 100.

Schools might want to think about matching their aims up with the activities. For example:

- Schools aiming to allow pupils to 'catch-up' academically might find that a structured literacy or numeracy programme or family learning activities are better suited.

- Schools seeking to tackle young peoples' fears about transition and build social confidence might find it appropriate to take pupils on a residential trip or to provide fun and informal ways for pupils to interact and learn.

Schools with **written objectives** for their Summer School often found these proved useful at a later date, for returning to re-assess whether the Summer School was successful and whether any adjustments might be needed in future.

Example: One school's aims and objectives for their Summer School example

Literacy transition Summer School

Aims:

To offer a broad and balanced two-week literacy curriculum to develop and consolidate reading and writing, speaking and listening using the vehicle of VCOP (Vocabulary, Connectives, Openers and Punctuation). The literacy-learning journey encompasses content from a range of subjects such as History, R.E, English and Arts. The expectation of progress is one level, in each skill set, based on baseline data gathered on the first day of the project. Assessment will be delivered through formative assessment and feedback.

Objectives:

- boost confidence
- narrow the attainment gap between identified pupils and their peers
- negate learning loss over the summer break
- provide a range of cultural and outdoor recreation activities
- build trust and form positive relationships with students
- promote community cohesion and involvement
- raise aspirations and attainment for children coming from disadvantaged homes and Looked After Children (LAC)
- smooth transition for those coming from isolated feeder schools
- gain valuable baseline data
- enhance existing transition arrangements.

Schools might consider putting **measurable criteria in place** to track the impact of the Summer School once pupils have entered Year 7. This could include the use of feedback questionnaires or (formal/informal) assessment of pupils' needs and abilities before and after the Summer School takes place. This kind of **monitoring and self-evaluation** can play an important role in ensuring that there is evidence to promote the benefits of the Summer School to other staff and partner organisations, and to provide information to make adjustments to the programme in future years.

Some more specific ideas for monitoring and evaluating Summer Schools include:

- Anonymous 'comments' boxes/feedback sheets for parents/carers and pupils.

- A de-brief meeting for Summer School staff, to reflect on 'lessons learned' to feed into planning the next year's Summer School.

- Informal follow-up with parents/carers whose children were invited but did not attend the Summer School, to explore the factors involved. This might be undertaken via form tutors, support staff, or home-school liaison officers or through feedback sheets.

- Pre- and post-testing of pupils' needs and abilities, using tools such as:
  - NFER Literacy Tests
  - Pupil Assessment of Self and School (PASS)
  - Myself as a Learner Scale (MALS).

- Comparing scores in Year 7 progress tests or assessments between disadvantaged pupils who attended/did not attend a Summer School, and drawing upon Key Stage 2 test results as a baseline.

The Summer Schools programme also has wider potential benefits in **helping to deliver National Curriculum objectives**. Several of the case-study schools took the opportunity to strengthen their existing broad curriculum links and to work with external organisations to deliver the curriculum in alternative ways. Schools also ensured their Summer Schools focused on building emotional support and laying the foundations for learning during the school term. The following sections examine how this was achieved.

3. Designing a Summer School

This section focuses on designing a Summer School, including decisions about who to involve, when and how long to run the activities for, and how to identify disadvantaged pupils. It also highlights some of the design challenges and how they might be overcome.

3.1 Who to involve in planning

Schools can involve a wide range of stakeholders in the design of Summer Schools. The school survey showed that it was usually senior school staff, teachers and support staff who took the lead during the first year. Partner organisations were involved in planning just over a third of Summer Schools, but few involved pupils (18 per cent), or feeder primary schools (14 per cent) and even fewer involved parents/carers (6 per cent) at the design stage in the first year of the programme.

Key learning points schools might want to consider are:

- **Actively involving a range of teachers and curriculum leaders in planning**. It is important to ensure that the design of the Summer School reflects the school's ethos, curriculum and expectations for behaviour management. Schools might consider involving teachers from feeder primary schools too, to get an insight into pupils' needs and interests.

- **Making the Summer School attractive to pupils and families**. Thinking about the aims, content and timing from the point of view of pupils and parents/carers is important, to ensure good take-up during the holidays.

- **Offering a broad curriculum in the Summer School**. This makes the Summer School more engaging for pupils and brings together staff who might not otherwise have the opportunity to collaborate. It also provides a good means of integration between core curriculum work and enrichment, arts or sports activities.

Involving partners and contractors

Working with partner organisations can bring a fresh perspective and secure access to specialist external resources, such as arts, cultural or leisure facilities; multimedia and IT equipment; specific expertise or coaching, or access to study centres.

When working with partner organisations, you might wish to:

- Make the best use of organisations that already have a proven track record of delivering high quality activities with the school.

- Meet with any potential new subcontractors at an early stage, to get a sense of whether their approach is in keeping with your schools' ethos and how far they are willing to tailor what they offer to meet the school's needs.

- Set aside time for joint planning, to ensure academic and enrichment activities complement one another.

Involving pupils and families in designing your Summer School

Schools may wish to involve pupils and parents/carers in designing Summer Schools. This can help to make sure that activities are appealing and can also help raise awareness of the Summer School.

Example: Pupil involvement in Summer Schools design

One of the case-study schools ran workshops with Year 6 pupils during their final term of primary school to choose the themes for the Summer School. The feedback from the pupils demonstrated that this was very effective in obtaining their interest and that the pupils gained confidence in seeing their ideas taken on board.

3.2 Timing and duration

The survey showed that schools held their Summer Schools at different times throughout the summer holidays, although most took place during the two weeks immediately after the end of the summer term. There was a dip in the number of Summer Schools held in the middle of the summer holidays, but some schools chose to hold their Summer Schools at the end of the summer holidays, just before the beginning of the new academic year.

The experiences of schools during the first year of the programme suggest that there is not a 'one size fits all' approach. Timing may be decided by:

- **Educational factors** – for example, by delivering a Summer School at a mid-point during the Summer Holidays to minimise the amount of time spent away from learning for disadvantaged pupils, to reduce 'summer learning loss'; and,

- **Practical factors** – including the availability of staff and pupils over the summer holiday period, access to venues and the ability to book trips or activities during peak times, and key dates for religious practices such as Ramadan.

The following presents some of the pros and cons of running a Summer School at different times during the summer holiday period, based on the experiences of the schools that participated in the 2012 evaluation.

Table 2 Summer School timing: pros and cons

Approach	Pros	Cons
Early Summer School (immediately after the end of the summer term)	• Staff are more likely to be available at the start of the holiday period • Likely to be easier to engage pupils while still in 'school mode' • Prevents pupils' worries about starting school building up over the holidays	• There is a relatively long break in learning following the Summer School
Mid Summer School (mid-point during the summer holidays)	• Breaks the holiday period into two shorter blocks, minimising the time spent away from learning	• There is a break in learning before and after the Summer School • May be difficult to secure staff time during the peak holiday period
Late Summer School (immediately before the new term)	• Increases pupils' confidence immediately before starting the new term • Pupils retain what they learned during the Summer School when they start school	• Could be difficult to engage pupils at the end of their summer holiday after a long break from learning • Effectively leads to a longer first term which could be tiring for pupils and staff
'Stretched' Summer School (activities across the summer holidays)	• Provides an opportunity for on-going learning • Enables pupils to get involved in a longer project (for example, using crafts or film-making)	• May be difficult to secure availability of staff and premises throughout the summer period • Pupil attendance may be variable due to a greater likelihood of the Summer School being disrupted by family holidays, or other family commitments

When planning a Summer School, organisers may want to consider the impact of different models on costs and staff availability. The survey found that the duration of

Summer Schools ranged from two days to six weeks[9], with just over half of Summer Schools (54 per cent) lasting two weeks.

A one-week programme can be suitable for familiarising pupils with the new school environment, meeting other pupils and teachers, and getting their bearings.

A two week programme (or longer) can be more suitable:

For a Summer School with a focus on literacy or numeracy skills development, as it allows time for pupils to acquire the desired skills within a structured programme, alongside enrichment activities.

For a Summer School involving a residential trip, to give pupils some time away from their usual surroundings and to build confidence and social skills.

A longer Summer School might have implications in terms of attendance because of the greater likelihood of clashes with family or staff holidays, and the challenge of maintaining pupils' levels of interest over the full period.

Practical considerations

Some of the other practical considerations around the timing of the Summer School are:

- **Anticipate other significant events taking place in the summer period** – consulting with families can help to identify potential clashes that might affect participation. Planning how to accommodate pupils fasting during Ramadan is one such example found in the evaluation. Some practical steps might include running activities during the morning to take account of pupils' lower energy levels later in the day, and making time for prayers.

- **Book buildings and facilities** – it may not be possible to use school facilities at certain times due to scheduled building and maintenance work or annual leave for grounds or catering staff. Pupils who took part in the evaluation welcomed a chance to see around their new school and were disappointed if this was not possible. Some schools found creative ways to make the most of the available space (e.g. running activities in the sports hall).

- **Check staff availability well in advance** – where the Summer School needs subject experts (e.g. in Maths, Science or PE), the schedule has to be planned around their availability. Consider involving Year 7 staff (teachers and form tutors), to provide continuity for the pupils when they start the new term.

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[9] Four schools ran a Summer School for two days and a further four schools ran a Summer School for six weeks.

Some of the case-study schools found that the Summer School provided an opportunity for school staff to achieve their directed hours.

3.3 Deciding who to invite and identifying disadvantaged pupils

Identifying disadvantaged pupils

Most of the schools responding to the survey (59 per cent) consulted with feeder primary schools to identify disadvantaged pupils moving to their school. Primary schools were also able to offer additional information about pupils' needs, such as medical conditions, behavioural issues and Special Educational Needs (SEN). Other sources schools can consider using to identify disadvantaged pupils include:

- **Key to Success website**: schools will be required to upload the Unique Pupil Number (UPN) of all pupils expected to join Year 7 in September and the Key to Success system will identify which of those pupils are eligible for the Summer School. This will include both pupils eligible because of their FSM history and those eligible due to being looked after by the local authority. Guidance on how to use this system will be issued by the Department in due course see: https://www.keytosuccess.education.gov.uk/schools/

- **Virtual Looked After Children Head**: each local authority has a dedicated officer whose role it is to champion the educational needs of the children looked after by the authority and to track and monitor their attainment as if those children attended a single school. For more details see: http://www.education.gov.uk/a00208592/virtual-school-head

Starting to identify the FSM and looked after pupils well in advance can pay dividends in terms of planning and take-up. Where schools have a high number of feeder primaries, a targeted approach might be helpful. For example, schools can work closely with the feeder primaries with the highest number of FSM pupils moving to the school and involve the disadvantaged pupils there in the design of appealing publicity materials. These can then be shared with other feeder primary schools. Schools might also work with feeder primaries to collate wider information about issues affecting pupils so that this is centrally accessible, as the example below helps to illustrate.

Example: Gathering background data on disadvantaged pupils

One of the case-study schools worked closely with 30 local feeder primaries to gather a variety of pupil data that might impact upon their education such as health and behavioural problems, language difficulties, looked after status and FSM eligibility. They incorporated this information into a transition document. Collecting this information enabled the school to effectively target disadvantaged pupils for their Summer School. It also helped staff to be aware of pupils' additional needs in advance and plan accordingly.

Making the Summer School inclusive

The aim of the Summer Schools programme is to provide transitional support for pupils who are eligible for FSM and those pupils looked after continuously for more than six months by the local authority that are moving into Year 7. The Department expected these pupils to be prioritised and schools were funded based on the offer made to these pupils. Schools can, however, take steps to widen the offer if they wish to do so in order to make the Summer School inclusive to a wider range of pupils from different social backgrounds.

The survey showed that a quarter of schools offered the Summer School to the entire new intake in the first instance to provide equal opportunities to take part. There are a number of ways this can be achieved, but schools will want to make a judgement locally on what is appropriate for their Summer School:

- Using other funding sources to create additional places.
- Charging parents/carers of non-disadvantaged pupils.
- Offering planned places turned down by disadvantaged pupils to other pupils making the transition whom the school thinks would benefit. If a large number of disadvantaged pupils turn down their place the school should try to understand why so that the Summer School offer can be adjusted or, if appropriate, scaled back.

4. Running a Summer School

Running a Summer School can be challenging, both in terms of the logistics, and in catering for pupils' varying needs and interests. This section presents some of the key learning from the evaluation with regard to recruiting pupils and delivering Summer School activities.

4.1 Recruitment and participation

Due to the targeted nature of the Summer Schools programme and its focus on disadvantaged pupils, schools needed to find a way of reaching disadvantaged pupils whilst avoiding any possible stigma by 'singling them out'. The evaluation showed that schools generally managed this effectively, although there were a few instances where parents/carers of pupils who were not eligible for the programme objected that their child could not take part.

Schools might consider the following actions, to avoid stigma:

- **Careful use of terminology in any Summer School advertising and publicity**, to avoid a sense that the programme is remedial or for 'less able' pupils.

- **Approaching individual pupils and parents/carers discreetly** in advance to raise awareness, to avoid any sense of being 'singled-out'.

- **Discussing plans openly with teachers and parents/carers**, to dispel any myths.

- **Involving parent/carer volunteers in delivery** or previous participants as 'peer advocates'.

Encouraging disadvantaged pupils to attend

The **non-participation of pupils** was one of the main challenges in the first year of the Summer School programme. Findings from the survey show that just half (50 per cent) of the disadvantaged pupils invited to a Summer School attended at least once. The biggest drop off was between those disadvantaged pupils invited to participate and those who agreed to take part (41 per cent). The following diagram illustrates this issue, based on the average number of disadvantaged pupils who were invited per school.

Diagram 3 Retention rates of disadvantaged pupils invited to attend a Summer School (2012 survey)

- Number of disadvantaged pupils **invited to participate**

  32

- Percentage of disadvantaged pupils who **agreed to take part**

  59%

- Percentage of disadvantaged pupils who **actually attended**

  50%
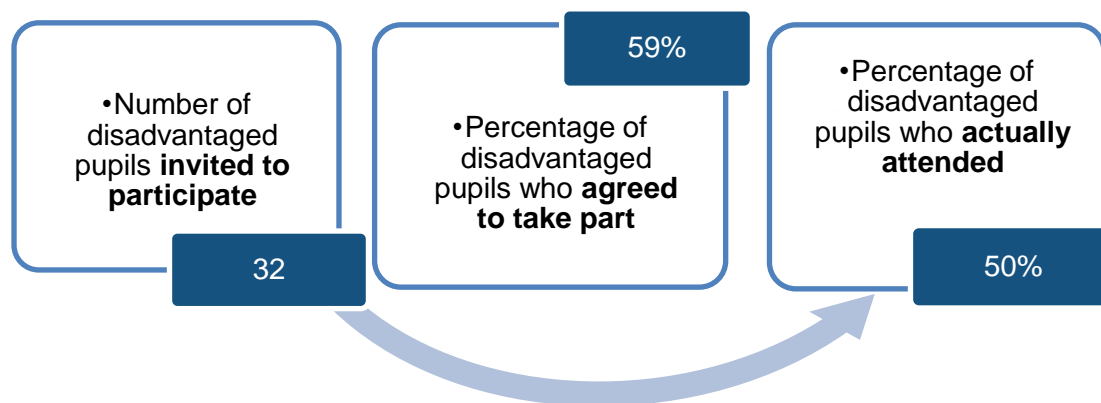
There is no easy solution to boosting participation, but the evaluation identified a range of strategies used by schools.

Potential ways to boost participation in Summer Schools

✓ **Make the Summer School appealing;** including alternative ways of describing the Summer 'School' to emphasise the 'fun' element.

✓ **Operate a formal applications process**; where parents/carers register their child for a place and confirm attendance in advance.

✓ **Engage with parents/carers at transition events**, to raise awareness of the Summer School and encourage participation.

✓ **Send invitations out as early as possible**, to minimise the risk of diary clashes with family holidays.

✓ **Make invitations accessible and appealing**, involve pupils in the design, use clear and simple language and make copies available in other languages.

✓ **Follow-up by telephone and SMS texting**, and maintain a persistent approach.

✓ **Offer vouchers or discounts** on PE kit or school uniform.

✓ **Consider travel arrangements**, so that transport does not pose an unnecessary barrier. This might include providing a travel plan to pupils and parents/carers, or arranging for a mini-bus to collect those who have further to travel or might not be able to afford the bus fare.

The biggest challenge for schools was getting disadvantaged pupils to attend at all. After pupils had attended once, schools had fewer problems in maintaining their attendance for the duration of

the Summer School. The case-study schools reported some instances of intermittent attendance due to other commitments, but suggested that **getting pupils to attend and enjoy themselves on day one is 'half the battle won'**.

Around half of schools responding to the survey (46 per cent) said they did not know why disadvantaged pupils did not attend, because this information was not recorded. A **light-touch follow-up** with the parents/carers of disadvantaged pupils who were invited but who did not attend could be useful. This might include feedback sheets, and individual pupil comments gathered informally by form tutors, support staff or peer advocates. The Education Endowment Foundation's 'DIY Evaluation Toolkit' could support teachers in designing and carrying out evaluation activities. See http://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/index.php/library/diy-evaluation-guide

Schools were able to offer places to other pupils (as set out on page 12). About three quarters (74 per cent) of schools responding to the survey did so, and non-disadvantaged pupils comprised 37 per cent of Summer School attendees in the surveyed schools.

Parental engagement

The Summer School provides schools with a positive way to **engage with parents and carers**, although around a quarter of schools responding to the survey identified this as one of their main challenges.

Opportunities for parental engagement varied considerably between Summer Schools, depending on how they were structured. Schools might therefore wish to consider integrating 'contact points' with parents/carers that allow this to be achieved more systematically. Some examples are provided below.

> **Potential ways of strengthening parental engagement**
>
> ✓ Make Year 7 staff available to speak with parents/carers at Summer School pick-up and collection times, and involve pupils in discussing what they have done that day.
>
> ✓ Provide opportunities for parents/carers to volunteer at the Summer School and help out with activities.
>
> ✓ Run activity sessions which involve parents/carers and children, such as cookery or art workshops.
>
> ✓ End the Summer School with a final celebration event, such as a performance or awards ceremony, where pupils, parents/carers and wider family members can attend together to celebrate their achievements.

4.2 Financial management

Schools were funded £500 per disadvantaged pupil to offer a two-week Summer School place and £250 per disadvantaged pupil to offer a one-week Summer School place. The survey results showed that the average cost of delivering a Summer School was £7,833 per school; which worked out at **£185 per pupil per week**. As might be expected, the 'per pupil' cost tended to be lower for schools with larger numbers of pupils attending.

Around a quarter of surveyed schools had accessed some form of additional funding, which included core school funds, parental contributions; or other (external) sources. The case studies showed that some schools benefited from additional resources in the form of volunteer time from parents/carers or members of the community, and donations from local businesses such as staff time, food and equipment.

The survey showed that schools accessing additional funding tended to have a higher number of pupils attending their Summer Schools and that costs tended to be greater for schools offering a greater number of activities. The reasons for the higher costs are not fully known, but it is intuitive that schools levering-in additional funds would have greater resources at their disposal to offer a larger Summer School with more pupils. In addition, topping-up with other funds gives schools greater flexibility to widen access to their Summer School for a greater range of pupils, not exclusively disadvantaged pupils. These findings suggest that there is a good case for schools topping-up the main funding allocation from the Department, especially where they have fewer disadvantaged pupils.

Types of Summer School expenditure

The ten case studies provide an insight to the types of Summer School expenditure. The main budget lines are summarised in the table below.

Table 4 Sources of Summer School expenditure

Staff costs		Other costs	
Common	**Less common**	**Common**	**Less common**
• Direct staff costs: payment to school staff running the Summer School	• Cost of external partner(s) to run the Summer School • Specialist staff costs e.g. sports technicians and arts practitioners	• Transport • Venue hire • Purchase or hire of equipment/facilities • Tickets/ event entry • Meals and refreshments	• Overheads apportionment • IT equipment • Certificates • Arts and crafts materials

The total costs were higher for Summer Schools with higher staffing ratios and for those offering a greater number of different activities. Costs were higher for Summer Schools offering residential experiences or numeracy activities.

The budget breakdown for individual Summer Schools will vary considerably, depending on the types of activities schools wish to deliver. The example provided in the following table illustrates a two-week Summer School delivered in 2012. This Summer School largely delivered school-based activities 'in house,' with teachers taking an active role in planning and delivering the sessions. A total of 31 disadvantaged pupils attended out of the 50 disadvantaged pupils offered a place.

Table 5 Cost breakdown: School-led and run Summer School (example)

Type of activity	Activity Cost
Direct staff costs	£11,375
Equipment hire	£5,600
Venue hire	£4,742
Meals / lunches for pupils	£1,000
Tickets / event entry	£237
Transport	£1,000
Other costs	£297
Total Cost	**£24,251**

One challenge for schools in managing a Summer School budget is that the pupil numbers can sometimes fluctuate during the programme. This has implications for calculating items such as catering and venue hire. Schools should keep this element of unpredictability in mind when calculating their budgets.

Example: Utilising Summer School funding

The coordinator for one Summer School asked each of the Heads of Department within the school to submit a 'mini bid', outlining what they could offer, and the resources needed to deliver the activities. Staff felt this worked well in involving a wide range of staff in planning the Summer School, and encouraging creativity.

4.3 Staff deployment

The case studies underline the importance of allowing sufficient resources to **ensure the participation of a good range of teaching and support staff** at Summer Schools; to deliver all of the desired elements and to ensure that pupils can benefit from appropriate learner support. It is also important to ensure that the staffing for the Summer School reflects the skills profile that is needed to deliver the activities (including subject expertise), and that the staff are enthusiastic and support the aims of the Summer School in providing transitional support for disadvantaged pupils. The survey showed that the average staffing ratios were 2.4 pupils per adult and 4.8 pupils per teacher.

Teaching and support staff performed a variety of roles within the case-study Summer Schools. It was common for subject specialists to take a more active role in the planning and delivery of the activities, where these had a strong curricular element (e.g. Maths, English, Science or PE). This sometimes included co-delivery with external staff such as arts or sports organisations, as part of a wider themed programme of activity. Several of the case-study schools had consciously involved staff from across the Year 7 teaching team in supervising activities; thus enabling pupils to meet with as many of their teachers as possible. Teaching staff also commonly had some kind of presence in supporting off-site delivery. The examples from the case-study schools included accompanying pupils on residential trips, and supporting external contractors with pupil supervision and behaviour management.

Learning support staff and pastoral staff were actively engaged in the case-study Summer Schools. Their role typically entailed a mix of group-based and one-to-one support. One school actively involved the school counsellor throughout their local Summer School programme, which proved very effective in better understanding and responding to the pupils' emotional support needs.

4.4 Working with partners to deliver a Summer School

The majority of schools who responded to the survey used school staff to deliver their Summer School activities. Just under half worked with external partners or contractors. Relatively few Summer Schools were entirely outsourced to a provider. The types of external organisations involved in the case-study schools included the following:

- arts and media organisations
- theatre/drama companies
- professional sports and leisure coaches
- outward-bound activity/residential providers
- independent educational organisations.

Involving external organisations in running Summer Schools can **provide access to additional expertise** which are not available within the school. It can also widen the offer so that pupils have **more choice in terms of the activities**.

Example: Involving external expertise

One case-study school worked with a media production company to perform and film a drama production. This gave a real focus to the Summer School and helped to maintain pupils' interest as filming took place throughout the summer[10].

Table 6 The range of people and organisations involved in delivering Summer Schools (2012 survey)

People involved	Percentage of schools
School staff	88%
School staff working with external contractors	43%
External contractors only	13%
Local authority staff	5%
A group of schools working together *with* external contractors	2%
A group of schools working together *without* external contractors	2%
Parents/carers	2%
Others	12%
Number of schools	**838**

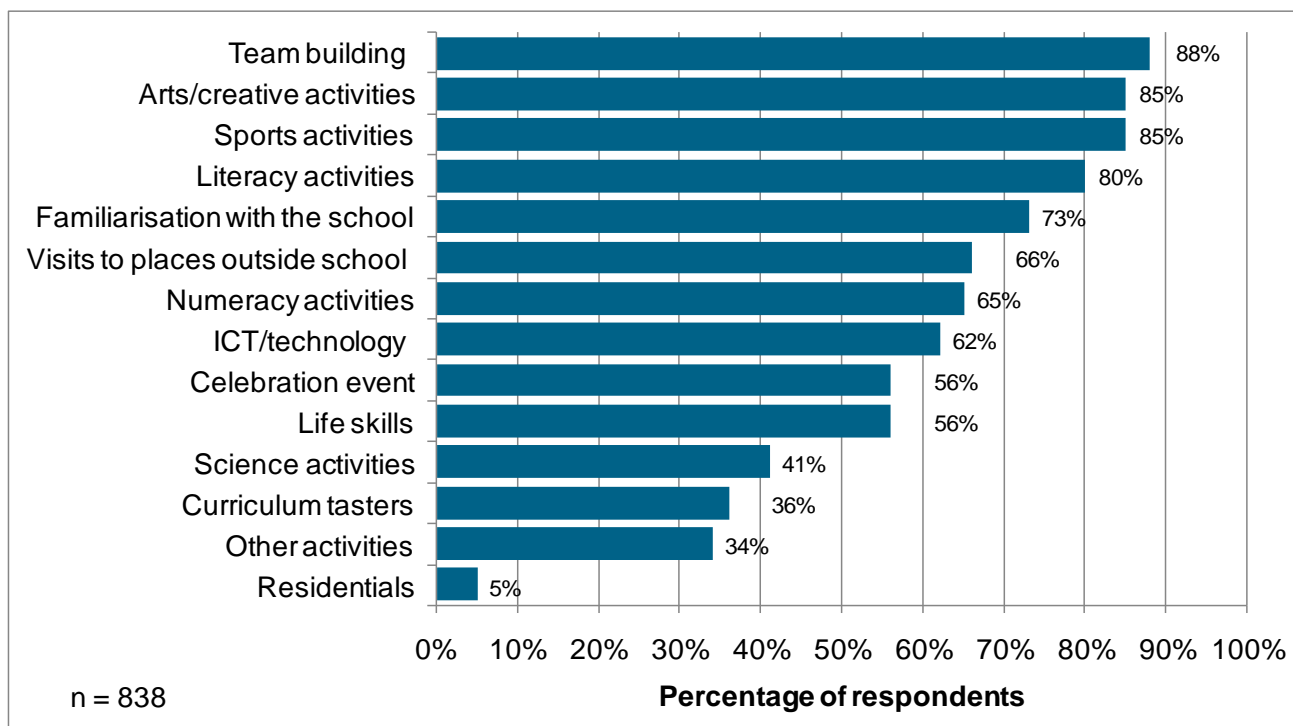Schools could give more than one answer so percentages sum to more than 100.

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[10] Schools will be familiar with the parental consent requirement involved in photographing or filming pupils and may wish to factor the time involved into planning arrangements.

4.5 Summer School activities

The Department identified broad aims for Summer Schools but did not prescribe what activities school should deliver. Schools were free to design and structure their Summer School locally to ensure it effectively met the needs of their disadvantaged pupils.

The Summer Schools who responded to the survey provided a wide range of activities in different settings, including at the school and off-site. The types of activities are summarised in the following table.

Table 7 Activities provided by Summer Schools (2012 survey)

Activity	Percentage of respondents
Team building	88%
Arts/creative activities	85%
Sports activities	85%
Literacy activities	80%
Familiarisation with the school	73%
Visits to places outside school	66%
Numeracy activities	65%
ICT/technology	62%
Celebration event	56%
Life skills	56%
Science activities	41%
Curriculum tasters	36%
Other activities	34%
Residentials	5%

n = 838

Schools could give more than one answer so percentages sum to more than 100.

The school survey showed that enrichment activities were widespread among Summer Schools in the first year of the programme, including team building, arts and sports. However, most Summer Schools also provided literacy activities and took steps to familiarise pupils with the school environment. Fewer Summer Schools included science activities or curriculum tasters and very few offered residential experiences.

The evaluation showed that Summer Schools often provided a combination of activities, with an emphasis on pupils having 'fun'. Staff acknowledged that pupils were attending the Summer School during their holidays and that as such formal learning in classroom environments was not always appropriate.

Schools considering this type of approach might consider offering:

- subject taster sessions – e.g. Science, languages and IT
- embedded literacy and numeracy within other activities
- sports, arts and cultural activities

- film-making
- citizenship education
- buddying by older pupils
- family learning
- sessions with guest speakers or local entrepreneurs.

The case studies showed that Summer Schools can provide an effective setting to help pupils understand the main differences between teaching and learning in Years 6 and 7. Several of the case-study schools introduced **curriculum themes** that would be covered later in the term. The aim was to give disadvantaged pupils a head start, so that they would be familiar with the material when the topics came around again which would encourage their active participation in class.

Similarly, some teachers used the Summer School to **model the expected behaviour and conduct** for the new term. Having an opportunity to interact with pupils during the Summer School meant that staff could gain pupils' trust and respect, whilst setting boundaries. Pupils valued this approach because it provided consistency and fairness in how they could expect to be treated, and set a 'fun but strict' atmosphere. The aim was to ensure that pupils were able to settle more quickly following the start of term and to avoid disruption during the initial weeks.

The case studies highlighted the importance of **differentiating the Summer School activities** according to pupils' academic abilities, and their social and emotional needs. There was mixed feedback from pupils about the curricular aspects of the Summer Schools, with some feeling that they were 'too easy…like primary school' and others finding the work too hard. Schools also wanted to avoid a highly structured learning programme, as attendance is voluntary and some pupils might need to miss days due to holidays or other commitments.

When designing Summer School activities, you might wish to:

- ensure that the Summer School includes adequate learner support to cater for a wide range of needs and abilities;
- include pastoral staff in the Sumer School alongside teachers;
- allow space within the Summer School for fun/recreational activities; and
- ensure that there is sufficient flexibility in the programme for pupils to catch up if they miss individual sessions.

Familiarisation activities

Summer Schools can offer practical ways for pupils to become familiar with the school environment and to learn about the types of support that will be available to them. The case studies showed that, before they came to the Summer School, many pupils were concerned about getting lost or getting into trouble for being late or not knowing the rules.

One pupil from a case-study school said:

[Before the Summer School] *I was anxious about doing something wrong, but not knowing you've done it wrong. At primary school you've got all of these rules, but they're not really majorly enforced.*

A further pupil said:

I liked going to see the school and to have a little tour like we did on the taster days. It helped to see the teachers that I would be working with.

Some of the ways that schools might help to familiarise pupils include the following:

- Allow time for mini-tours of the school, or plan an activity such as a 'treasure hunt' that allows pupils to get to know the school buildings.

- Provide an opportunity for the new intake to meet older pupils so they can ask questions about school life and dispel any bullying fears about 'bigger' and older pupils.

Several schools also used drama to help pupils to get to know each other, gain confidence and overcome their fears of speaking in front of others as the example below illustrates.

Example: Using drama to address pupils' concerns about bullying

One case-study school used drama to tackle pupils' fears about not being able to make new friends, or being bullied. Role play was used to act out scenarios that the pupils were most concerned about. Staff were able to explain the lines of reporting if pupils ever had concerns, and how adults could help them.

Summer School settings

Summer Schools can help to ensure that pupils become oriented to their new school environment, whilst also providing opportunities to explore new places and to widen their horizons. Schools might wish to consider:

- Delivering some activities off-site and allowing pupils to engage with the local community. For example, in one Summer School, pupils carried out a survey of local park users as part of a citizenship theme.

- Providing a day trip or residential activity to give pupils an opportunity to gain in confidence and overcome their fears (e.g. rock climbing, horse riding).

- Making use of local sporting, arts or cultural facilities, to raise pupils' aspirations and provide a theme to support learning during the week.

The following table illustrates some of the aspects of the Summer School 2012 programme that pupils from one or more schools told us they liked or disliked.

Table 8 Summer School activities - pupils' likes and dislikes

+ Liked	- Disliked
Commonly identified:	*Commonly identified:*
• Meeting others in the year group; making friends; using drama to get to know other pupils	• Unchallenging literacy/numeracy work
• Meeting older pupils	• Cancelled, over-subscribed or re-scheduled activities
• Getting to know the staff, and being treated 'fairly'	• Too few opportunities to look around the school grounds
• Trying new activities they had not been able to do before, such as languages and crafts	*Individual/less common example:*
• Sports and physical activities	• Individual pupils being allowed to dominate the session
• The organisation of the day – a mix of class-work and fun activities	• Poor behaviour of other pupils
Individual/less common examples:	• Low energy levels due to fasting for Ramadan
• Residential trips	• Not enough boys attending.
• Specific activities – drama and literacy; feeling confident to read aloud.	

5.   Success and impact

This section focuses on the success and impact of Summer Schools in the 2012 programme. It also highlights some of the constraints in measuring and attributing impact.

5.1   What schools, pupils, parents and carers said about success

Most schools responding to the survey rated their Summer Schools as highly successful and the overwhelming majority said they wanted to participate again in the future. According to schools, the main benefits of Summer Schools were:

- increased pupils' confidence and self-esteem;
- relationship building among pupils and between pupils and staff;
- improved pupil behaviour and engagement with school; and
- enhanced learning outcomes.

As one headteacher summed-up from their experience of delivering the Summer School programme:

> *It was a fabulous opportunity to develop what the school has to offer and give these children the best possible start when they came in September.*

Confidence and self-esteem

Improving disadvantaged pupils' confidence and self-esteem was one of the main outcomes of the programme. Pupils from the case-study schools said they previously had concerns about the size and scale of the secondary school. They were also worried about the prospect of making new friends and getting to know their teachers. Pupils said that attending the Summer School had made them feel reassured about starting their new school and secondary teachers noticed that pupils who had been to the Summer School were more confident in finding their way around.

As one pupil said:

> *They took us all around the school so when you start school you already have these places in your mind.*

Pupils described how they felt relieved because they found it easier than expected to make friends at the Summer School. This allowed them to relax and look ahead to the new term. Once they started their new school, pupils were more willing to speak to the teachers they had met at the Summer School.

One parent explained how the Summer School had helped her daughter to overcome her shyness:

> *It* [the Summer School] *taught her not to hold back, taught her that if she believes in herself she should go for it. It's brought her out of herself a little bit. It has helped her confidence and she'll do more stuff than she would have done.*

Some pupils found that they knew more than their new classmates as a result of attending the Summer School. For example, a school which structured its Summer School activities around a medieval theme revisited the topic later in the autumn term and those pupils who had attended the Summer School were able to demonstrate their knowledge to the class. This was a rare experience for some pupils, and especially those of lower ability.

Many pupils identified bullying as a major concern about starting at secondary school. Unfortunately, some pupils' fear of bullying persisted into Year 7, despite taking part in a Summer School. Although most case-study schools touched on the subject, pupils' comments indicate that they felt that they had not always received enough specific information about how the school was preventing bullying, or what they should do if it happened to them.

Relationships among pupils and between pupils and staff

Summer Schools provided an important opportunity for pupils to develop positive relationships with peers and staff before the start of the new school year. The social benefits of Summer Schools for pupils were sustained to a varying extent across the case-study schools during the autumn term. Although few pupils made lasting friendships, they were reassured by seeing familiar faces around the school.

Pupils often formed positive relationships with teachers and other school staff during the Summer School, particularly where there were sustained opportunities for interaction, such as on residential trips. One of the strongest benefits of having been involved directly in a Summer School for staff was the potential to use the rapport they established with pupils once they had transferred to Year 7. They could use this familiarity to support disadvantaged pupils to take a lead in class, and to support them to speak out in front of their peers.

One teacher said:

> If you know five or six kids in a group of 30, because of the Summer School, you can have a laugh and a joke, and it brings the others in too… It is the 'ripple effect'… instead of wasting the first four or five weeks getting to know your classes.

Some schools used photographs and video footage of pupils engaging in Summer School activities to demonstrate positive images of the pupils to a wider range of staff who were not involved in the delivery of Summer School activities themselves. One school used photographs taken during a residential visit for staff training purposes and found it a positive way to introduce pupils to staff who had previously been highlighted by their feeder primary schools as having behavioural issues. One teacher commented that:

> Staff get given a lot of information about the kids, it's not negative information, it's honest information from the primary school, but it's easy to pre-judge the children on the information that we've got. So, on the one hand we were saying, the child does have these behavioural concerns, however here he is doing this, and this [at the Summer School]. So I think it was a very positive experience.

Improved behaviour and engagement with school

Teachers from the case-study schools noticed that the behaviour of pupils attending Summer Schools in the new school year was better than expected and commented on how well pupils had settled into Year 7. Even where pupils had been previously identified by their primary schools as a potential cause for concern, there were few issues with attendance or classroom behaviour in the autumn term.

Teachers felt that the consistency of their expectations of pupils' behaviour at the Summer School helped pupils to understand the school's principles on which their learning is founded. Setting-out codes of conduct and modelling expected behaviours was important, even within the 'fun' environment of the Summer School. As one teacher said:

> *They see the repercussions of us as teachers drawing them back into line as you would do in a normal school routine… there are boundaries and respect as well as fun.*

In some instances, very stark benefits were observed within the classroom after the start of term. One teacher commented as follows:

> *Some of the pupils had displayed poor behaviours at primary school and we were told that we were going to have problems with these children. I can't say it's all down to taking them away* [as part of the Summer School], *but I think giving them that experience, getting to know staff and students has helped.*

Pupils responded well when Summer Schools were used to emphasise the opportunity to have a 'fresh start' and leave behind any issues they had at primary school. This had an impact on pupils' attitudes and behaviour while at the Summer School which persisted after the transition. Two pupils commented as follows:

> *I knew school would be a tough challenge. At primary school, I wasn't the perfect standard of behaviour, but I think being here has made me want to be better. I think it was because – it* [the Summer School] *set you up.*

> *I feel excited about starting a new life because it means that all the bad stuff you've done at that* [primary] *school gets forgotten about and it's a fresh new start*.

Example: Measuring the impact of behaviour

At this case-study school, pupils are referred to the 'DEN' for behavioural incidents. In the first half of the autumn term, 64 pupils were referred, ten of whom had attended the Summer School. Of these, only one pupil was referred for poor behaviour, the remainder were referred for incidents such as being late with homework or not having the correct equipment in lessons. The staff were pleased with the low number of referrals of pupils who attended the Summer School, particularly because a number of these children had been identified by primary schools as having a history of poor behaviour.

Improvements in learning outcomes

The survey showed that many schools took an indirect approach to improving the educational attainment of disadvantaged children through their Summer School provision by seeking to improve pupils' engagement in learning, boosting their confidence and providing the social and emotional support to cope with transition. One case-study teacher explained:

> *If they are more confident then they're going to be more successful. If they integrate and are more sociable then they are going to be happier and if they're happier then they're going to be more successful in their lessons.*

The Summer Schools regularly enabled teachers and other staff to get an insight to pupils' academic abilities and learning needs, alongside their pastoral support needs, so that they could put strategies in place to support them in Year 7. This included tangible actions such as: one-to-one support, catch-up classes and a focus on particular curricular areas where the new intake were collectively weaker.

Schools often reinforced pupils' learning at the Summer School, by presenting them with evidence of their own progress and celebrating their achievements. This also included validating what pupils already knew from Year 6, and strengthening their 'self-belief'. Summer Schools were particularly successful where they combined curricular activities with an emphasis on 'fun'. This helped to embed learning whilst enabling pupils to enjoy new experiences and build confidence.

Approaches used by schools to extend the learning from the Summer School across the entire summer holidays included:

- Providing a booklet for pupils at the end of the Summer School setting out ways they could continue with their literacy work.

- Encouraging pupils to take home books that had been used to deliver literacy sessions at the Summer School.

- Encouraging pupils to build on some of the experiences at the Summer School such as reading other books by the same author or doing further research on themes introduced at the Summer School.

Pupils gave the following examples of how the Summer School had helped them:

- [The Summer School] was getting our brains warmed up so when we started… we were all fired up.

- Summer School helped me with my writing because we used to do an hour and a half of writing every morning to help us.

- When we were in Summer School we had English and it was our main thing… so doing that constantly made me like it more... I was getting better and felt confident.

- The teachers taught us tricks and methods of remembering things so when we started school we already knew the basics so it was easier. So when the teacher asks we're not just blank minded.

Three of the case-study schools attempted a more formal pre/post assessment of pupils' skills and abilities as part of the Summer School programme. Each claimed to have demonstrated academic progress, even within the relatively short timescale afforded by the Summer School. This was achieved through the use of pre/post assessment using questionnaires (such as the NFER Literacy Tests).

One teacher reported particularly impressive results from the literacy programme that they had incorporated into their Summer School alongside enrichment activities:

> *We identified the key areas – sentence structure, punctuation, vocabulary and purpose audience and form. So we chose the four biggies which they're now familiar and we've got a baseline… some* [pupils] *have made such rapid progress in two weeks... that will stand them in good stead for September.*

It proved difficult to attribute any more sustained learning outcomes to the Summer School after the new term had started. This was because case-study schools had not set up systems for tracking or comparing disadvantaged pupils who did/did not participate, and because of the challenge of isolating the effects of the Summer School from other transition support and the impact of teaching and learning in Year 7. There is a clear message about the importance of embedding monitoring and evaluation from the outset, to help improve the level of evidence that it is possible to collect.

5.2 How the impacts were captured and measured

Many schools responding to the survey used pupils' participation and enjoyment to indicate whether their Summer School had been successful. Some schools asked pupils to complete self-evaluation forms to gather their feedback. In one of the case-study schools, pupils attending a residential Summer School, were invited to complete a video diary each night based by using a 'Big Brother' style diary room.

Two case-study schools that delivered more structured literacy activities used pre- and post-tests to measure impact. Staff used individual pre-test results to set baselines for pupils' performance. They assessed progress on a daily basis over the two-week period. Both schools had evidence of measurable gains over the course of their Summer Schools. One school was developing an on-line evaluation to assess the subsequent literacy and numeracy progress of pupils who attended the Summer School.

It was challenging for schools to isolate the effects of the Summer School from the impact of other support that pupils may receive. A number of teachers planned to use existing assessment procedures to measure pupils' progress in Year 7, looking at the data of pupils who attended the Summer School to identify any differences in outcomes. Other criteria used to monitor the later progress of Summer School attendees included school attendance, involvement in behavioural incidents, and whether or not Summer School pupils accessed extra-curricular activities.

Potential ways of reviewing a Summer School include:

34

✓ **Have a clear set of objectives** setting out how the Summer School intends to impact on pupils' confidence, attitudes and attainment.

✓ **Monitor attendance levels** during the Summer School and find out the reasons for low take up or poor attendance.

✓ **Carry out individual target setting** to provide a baseline and identify pupils' needs.

✓ **Plan engaging methods to collect feedback** from pupils and parents/carers (for example, using video diaries, involving older pupils as interviewers, or asking pupils to write the best thing and the thing they would change on post-it notes).

✓ **Consider assessing changes in pupils' literacy and numeracy skills** using standardised tests.

✓ **Put a strategy in place to monitor pupils' subsequent progress in Year 7**. This could include test results, attendance records and disciplinary incidents.

✓ **Compare results with pupils from similar backgrounds who did not attend**, or with disadvantaged pupils in previous years.

6. Next Steps

This report presents the learning from the evaluation of the Department's Summer School programme in 2012. A clear theme to emerge from the evaluation is the extent to which schools have a genuine opportunity to design a Summer School that reflects their own school ethos and priorities, while also reinforcing the Pupil Premium objectives. The Schools Minister has confirmed that the Summer School programme will run again in 2013, which will ensure that this work is able to continue and potentially involve new schools that did not participate in 2012.

Reflections on the 2012 Summer Schools programme

The Summer Schools programme is the first to be funded at a national level with a targeted focus on disadvantaged pupils, and there were many 'unknowns' for the schools that opted to run a Summer School in the first year. Thanks to the schools that participated in the evaluation, we know that Summer Schools were reporting a wide range of benefits in building pupils' social confidence, helping them to become familiar with the school environment, setting positive expectations for behaviour in Year 7, and providing school staff with insights to pupils' academic and wider support needs.

The evaluation has also shown how Summer Schools often provided the impetus for tangible actions by schools, such as setting in place additional study support or mentoring, and flagging any causes for concern to the Year 7 team in advance of the new term. The early signs from the case-study research were that Summer School pupils had adjusted well, and that teachers had often observed an impact on pupils' behaviour and adjustment within the classroom.

An important function of this report is to ensure that schools who are participating in the 2013 Summer Schools programme for the first time are able to benefit from the lessons learned from the 2012 programme. The findings from the first year show that there is still work to be done to find ways of boosting levels of participation, and to avoid a of drop-off in numbers between the offer of funded places and levels of take-up by disadvantaged pupils. The evaluation also highlighted the importance of maximising the opportunities for parental engagement, through celebration events, awards ceremonies and family-focused activities.

Monitoring and evaluation is another area for development, and it is clear that schools are keen to find a light-touch way to gather effective feedback about their Summer Schools and to understand the impact on pupils.

Other useful resources and information

The following provides some links to other publicly available research, which are a source of information on the topics covered within this key findings report.

Pupil premium

Department for Education (2012b). *Pupil Premium: What You Need to Know* [online]. Available: http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/premium/b0076063/pp [4 December, 2012].

Supporting transitions from primary to secondary school

Day, L., McKenna, K. and McPhillips, K., (2007). *Transition Information Sessions*

(TIS) Demonstration Project: Year One Evaluation (DfES Research Report 850). London: DfES [online]. Available:

https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/RR850.pdf [23 January, 2013].

Education Endowment Foundation (2012) *Improving Literacy in the Transition: What Do We Need to Know About What Works?* EEF [online]. Available: http://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/library [4 January 2013].

Evangelou, M., Taggart, B., Sylva, K., Melhuish, E., Sammons, P. and Siraj-

Blatchford, I. (2008). *What Makes a Successful Transition from Primary to Secondary School?* (DCSF Research Report 019). London: DCSF [online]. Available: http://www.ioe.ac.uk/Successful_transition_from_primary_to_secondary_report.pdf [17 December, 2012].

Evans, K., George, N., White, K., Sharp, C., Morris, M. and Marshall, H. (2010). *Ensuring that All Children and Young People Make Sustained Progress and Remain Fully Engaged Through All Transitions Between Key Stages* (C4EO Schools and Communities Research Review 2). London: Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children and Young People's Services [online]. Available: http://www.c4eo.org.uk/themes/schools/sustainedprogress/files/kr_full_sustained_progress.pdf [4 December, 2012].

Goodman, A. and Gregg, P. (2010). *Poorer Children's Educational Attainment: How Important are Attitudes and Behaviour?* York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation [online]. Available:

http://www.jrf.org.uk/publications/educational-attainment-poor-children [4 December, 2012].

Parental engagement

Department for Education (2012). *Pupil Premium Case Studies: Engaging Hard-to-Reach Parents* [online]. Available:

http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/premium/how/b00218327/pupilpremiumcasestudies/engaginghardtoreachparents [23 January, 2013].

Goodall, J., and Vorhaus, J. with Carpentieri, J.D., Brooks, G., Akerman, R. and Harris, A. (2011) *Review of Best Practice in Parental Engagement: Practitioners Summary.* London: DfE [online].

Available: https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationDetail/Page1/DFE-RR156#downloadableparts [23 January, 2013].

Sherbert Research (2009) *Parents as Partners: 'Harder to Engage' Parents: Qualitative Research* (DfE Research Report 111). London: DCSF [online]*.* Available:

https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/DCSF-RR111.pdf [23 January, 2013].

Cultural and creative education

Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (2010). *Learning: Creative Approaches that Raise Standards.* London: Ofsted [online]. Available: http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/learning-creative-approaches-raise-standards [23 January, 2013].

Other summer school programmes

Terzian, M., Moore, K.A. and Hamilton, K. (2009). *Effective and Promising Summer*

Learning Programs and Approaches for Economically-Disadvantaged Children and

Youth: a White Paper for the Wallace Foundation. New York, NY: The Wallace Foundation [online]. Available:

http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/summer-and-extended-learning-time/summer-learning/Documents/Effective-and-Promising-Summer-Learning-Programs.pdf [4 December, 2012].

Self-evaluation for schools

Coe, R., Kime, S., Nevill, C. and Coleman, R. (2013). *The DIY Evaluation Guide. Education Endowment Foundation* [online]. Available: http://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/uploads/pdf/EEF_DIY_Evaluation_Guide_(2013).pdf [5 February 2013].

Annex 1: Top tips for running a successful Summer School

1. Designing and planning a Summer School

a) Identify your disadvantaged pupils

✓ **Access the Key to Success website** and identify which of the incoming Year 7 pupils are eligible for the Summer School. This will include both pupils eligible because of their FSM history and those eligible due to being looked after by the local authority.

✓ **Ask parents/carers** to indentify whether their child is entitled to Free School Meals and ask if they have any specific needs or concerns.

✓ Make early contact with **feeder primary school staff** so that they can help identify disadvantaged pupils and market the Summer School to families. They will also have a wealth of knowledge about the pupils which you can use to inform the content and timing of your Summer School.

✓ If you have a small number of disadvantaged pupils moving into Year 7, consider **working with other local schools** to deliver a joint Summer School or shared activities.

✓ Contact the **Virtual Looked After Children Head** in your authority as they will be able to indentify disadvantaged pupils and advise on their needs.

b) Set and review your aims and objectives

✓ Set **clear aims and objectives** for your Summer School, so that there is a shared understanding about what your school wants to achieve. This will ensure the activities are designed appropriately.

✓ Ensure you have processes in place to **measure the impact** the Summer School has in achieving personal, social and educational objectives. This could include standardised testing, checking progress in lessons, collecting feedback from pupils and their parents/carers.

c) Review your funding arrangements

✓ Ensure the school **bursar and/or business manager** knows the funding arrangements for the Summer School, and seek their advice if appropriate.

✓ Review the availability of **additional resources** that might be levered-in to make the Summer School funding go further. This might include other school

funding, donations from local businesses, volunteer time or in-kind support.

✓ Ensure that **school governors** are made aware of how the Summer School funding is being spent and how this will impact on pupil outcomes so that they can monitor progress.

d) Decide upon an appropriate length and structure

✓ Take **a 'long term view'** of the Summer School as part of the wider experience of transition for pupils, and think about integrating Summer School strategies and activities within teaching and learning in Year 7.

✓ Give careful consideration to **timing and duration**, plan around the availability of pupils and staff over the summer holiday period, and ensure that there is sufficient time to cover what you aim to achieve.

✓ Consider whether breaking the Summer School up into **shorter chunks** would work for your pupils. For example, would 2-3 days a week over a number of weeks work better than a block period?

e) Ensure the availability of staff

✓ If possible, involve a **wide range of staff** from the school, so that pupils get to know a range of teachers and support staff. Also include members of the Year 7 teaching team, to provide continuity for the pupils and enable staff to become familiar with the needs of the new intake.

✓ Make teaching staff available to **plan activities jointly** and if the Summer School is being subcontracted to an external agency ensure the approach is fully joined-up.

f) Design a high quality programme of activities

✓ **Involve parents/carers and disadvantaged pupils** in designing promotional material and Summer School activities. This will ensure they have some ownership of the programme and that it meets their needs.

✓ Make a list of the **expertise and resources** that are needed to deliver the Summer School, to establish what can be provided 'in house' by the school and what might need to be sourced externally (e.g. specialist arts/sports).

✓ Consider **working in partnership with external providers**, where they can offer added value. Ensure that activities are planned jointly with school staff to form a coherent programme.

✓ **Check the availability of buildings or equipment** well in advance – both internally to the school and for any trips or residential activities, so that these can be booked during the busy holiday period. This might also include opening the school canteen, so that pupils can get more of a feel of what the Year 7 experience will be like.

g) Set in place appropriate support for participation

✓ Review the **learning and pastoral support** needs within the new Year 7 cohort, and plan the type and level of classroom support accordingly.

✓ Consider whether pupils have any **specific travel requirements**, particularly if they are travelling far or if they are the only pupil making that journey, and offer support accordingly (e.g. travel maps, minibus pickups).

h) Publicise and recruit pupils to the Summer School

✓ Use school **open evenings** to promote the Summer School and encourage parents/carers whose children are eligible for Free School Meals, but have not registered, to do so.

✓ Consider whether a **written invitation** is the most appropriate way of communicating with parents/carers and give a deadline for parents/carers to confirm their child's attendance.

✓ For schools that have already run a Summer School as part of the 2012 programme, use 'alumni' as **advocates** for the programme.

✓ Consider providing **incentives for participation**, such as team points or discount schemes that are redeemable for school uniform or PE kit.

✓ Contact local businesses to see if they will **donate prizes** for pupils.

Running a Summer School

a) Deliver an inspiring mix of activities

✓ Include a **combination of activities** such as 'fun' sports and arts, together with curricular themed activities delivered in a creative way. Plan to include

something different or innovative to attract pupils to attend.

✓ Ensure that the Summer School places a **sufficient focus on literacy and numeracy development for disadvantaged pupils**, who are at greater risk of 'summer learning loss'. This might include the use of embedded literacy or numeracy, delivered via practical activities such as drama or quizzes.

✓ Provide **targeted support to disadvantaged pupils** (especially where Summer Schools are offered to other pupils) including individual target-setting and mentoring, and ensure that there is sufficient learner support to **differentiate the sessions** and cater for a range of academic abilities.

b) Make use of different locations and spaces

✓ Provide opportunities for pupils to **familiarise themselves with the school buildings and environment**. For example, a treasure hunt can be a fun activity and help pupils to become oriented to their new surroundings.

✓ Consider the merits of **running some activities off-site**, to give disadvantaged pupils new experiences and to challenge and inspire them.

✓ Include activities that help pupils get used to **learning independently** – something that will be new to them at secondary school.

c) Address the social and emotional aspects of transition

✓ Address any **fears pupils' might have around bullying** by providing specific activities and support, including details of strategies the school has to counteract bullying and what pupils should do if it happens to them.

✓ Find time within the programme of Summer School activities to **openly discuss topics that might be causing pupils concern**, such as bullying or making friends. Clearly explain the practical support that is in place.

✓ Consider **involving older pupils** to support the pupils moving into Year 7. New pupils get to meet the 'big' pupils in Year 11 and/or the sixth form and the older pupils get a positive reference on their CV.

d) Promote parental engagement

✓ Consider the merits of running some activities to **engage parents/carers in the delivery of the Summer Schools**. Activities such as cookery classes or family learning can be a fun way for parents/carers and pupils to participate.

✓ Involve **parents/carers as volunteers**, e.g. by engaging parents/carers with English as an Additional Language (EAL) to deliver cultural or language themed activities within the Summer School.

e) Celebrate success

✓ Organise a **celebration event** and invite the pupils', parents and carers to engage them and allow them to celebrate their child's success. Consider the use of awards or certificates, so that pupils have a lasting memento.

✓ Get pupils to hand in any work they produce so that teachers can assess it and establish where pupils have particular strengths and weaknesses. Consider using more formal **assessment** (e.g. pre/post tests) if appropriate.

✓ Consider the value of providing **home learning activities** for pupils to complete over the summer holidays if they wish to.

Embedding Summer School activities

✓ Find opportunities to make the **link with pupils' learning at home**, through worksheets, activities or reading for the duration of the summer holidays.

✓ Ensure that any valuable insights into pupils' needs gained through the Summer School are **used to plan ahead** for Year 7. This might include setting in place additional individualised support, running additional catch-up classes, or raising safeguarding concerns through the appropriate channels.

✓ **Review the Summer School** by bringing together the staff involved to assess what they have learnt and what worked well/less well. Use this information to improve future planning.

✓ **Share the Summer School learning** and the impact information you have collected with other staff, perhaps through a short staff meeting. Update school governors so they know what the school has done.

✓ Consider any **transferable learning** for other areas of the school, including the wider Year 7 transition programme, curricula, and learner support.

The views expressed in this report are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department for Education.

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at Jonathan Johnson, Piccadilly Gate, Store Street, Manchester,M1 2WD

 Email: jonathan.johnson@education.gsi.gov.uk

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